

MANISTEE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

70 Maple Street
Manistee, MI 49660

MEETING MINUTES

July 10, 2003

A meeting of the Manistee City Planning Commission was held on Thursday, July 10, 2003 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, City Hall, 70 Maple Street, Manistee, Michigan.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ray Fortier, David Kelley, John Serocki, Tony Slawinski and Roger Yoder

MEMBERS ABSENT: Bob Davis, Greg Ferguson, Joyce Jeruzal and Phil Picardat

OTHERS: Tom Warman (Heller Signs), Tom Amor Sr. (Amor Signs), Tom Amor Jr. (Amor Signs), Merlin Norby (Manistee News Advocate), Alan Marshall (City Council), Michael Ennis (Top Notch Auto), George Saylor (Gockerman, Wilson, Saylor and Hesslin), Megan Bobier Kempf (Tondue), Jon Rose (Community Development), and Denise Blakeslee (Administrative Assistant, Community Development Department) and others

Meeting was open at 7:02 p.m. by Chairman Yoder.

PUBLIC HEARING:

Amor Sign Studios/Zoning Amendment - Section 1419, 1420, 1421, 1423, 1425, & 1426 Freestanding Signs

A Public Hearing is being held in response to a request from Amor Sign Studios for a Zoning Amendment. Amor Sign Studio's is requesting that Sections 1419, 1420, 1421, 1423, 1425 & 1426 of the Sign Ordinance be amended. The proposed amendment would:

Delete the language "Limited to one Freestanding Sign per street on which the parcel has frontage.

Replace the language with "Limited to one Freestanding Sign per street on which the parcel has frontage per chart"

(Suggested) chart:

0	-	200ft	one freestanding sign
201	-	400 ft	two freestanding signs
401	-	800 ft plus	three freestanding signs

Tom Amor Sr., Amor Sign Studios measured out the number of parcels along U.S. 31 that would be effected by this amendment. This would result in approximately 8 parcels that would be allowed more than one sign and three parcels that would be allowed three signs. Mr. Amor spoke about the unique circumstances of the Carriage Inn property. The Zoning Board of Appeals denied a request for the north freestanding sign. Since that time Mr. Amor spoke to the State Police, who had objected to the proposed sign which included skirting which would create a visibility issue. Mr. Amor said that they did not object to the current sign which is a pole or freestanding sign that does not create a visibility problem.

Two districts would be excluded from the proposed amendment, the Historic Overlay District and the Residential Zoning District.

Chairman Yoder asked about the off premise signs that are located on the C&O Railroad property. Mr. Rose said that those signs were installed prior to the ordinance. This proposed amendment would not allow them to construct any additional signs.

There being no further discussion the Public Hearing Closed at 7:40 p.m.

CITIZEN QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS:

Megan Bobier Kempf, Tondy wanted to inform the Planning Commission that Tondy currently is looking at constructing a Coal Fired Plant at the old Drop Forge Site in Filer Township. In the event that location does not work out they are looking at a site in the City of Manistee. A site outside the City would be a third option. This information is for the Planning Commission and they are not requesting any action at this time they just want to keep the Planning Commission informed. Ms. Kempf spoke of the impact this would have on the community and the number of potential jobs for the community.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Planning Commission Meeting Minutes, June 5, 2003

MOTION by Ray Fortier, seconded by Tony Slawinski that the minutes of the June 5, 2003 Meeting of the Planning Commission Meeting be approved.

Motion approved unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS:

Amor Sign Studios/Zoning Amendment - Section 1419, 1420, 1421, 1423, 1425, & 1426 Freestanding Signs

A Public Hearing was held earlier in response to a request from Amor Sign Studios for a Zoning Amendment. Amor Sign Studio's is requesting that Sections 1419, 1420, 1421, 1423, 1425 & 1426 of the Sign Ordinance be amended. The proposed amendment would:

Delete the language "Limited to one Freestanding Sign per street on which the parcel has frontage.

Replace the language with "Limited to one Freestanding Sign per street on which the parcel has frontage per chart"

(Suggested) chart:

0	-	200ft	one freestanding sign
201	-	400 ft two	two freestanding signs
401	-	800 ft plus	three freestanding signs

Members of the Planning Commission discussed the proposed change and all of the districts that would be effected under the proposed language. The number of signs at the Carriage Inn site were discussed including the fact that the south sign is covered under a Special Use Permit and is not included in any signage computations.

MOTION by John Serocki, seconded by Tony Slawinski that the Planning Commission recommend to City Council Section 1421 of the Sign Ordinance be amended to read:

Limited to one Freestanding Sign per street on which the parcel has frontage. For parcels exceeding 600 feet of frontage on a street two freestanding signs will be allowed.

Motion passed unanimously.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Heller Signs/Zoning Amendment - Section 1411.D of the Sign Ordinance

A public hearing was held at the June 5, 2003 Planning Commission in response to a request from Heller Signs to amend Section 1411.D of the Ordinance to read:

Signs which include flashing or moving chasing lights, and ~~Animated Signs.~~

The Planning Commission postponed decision on this request until the July Meeting. A Worksession was held on June 26, 2003 and prior to this meeting on July 10, 2003. These worksessions allowed the Planning Commission members the opportunity to further review the request.

During the worksession held earlier this evening Tom Amor Jr. submitted a petition that he brought to the Planning Commission. Included in the petition was recommended language for the Zoning Amendment. The language included a definition for Electronic Variable Messages, allowing Electronic Variable Message signs in Section 1419 (Churches, Schools and Government), 1420 (Civic Center), 1421 (Commercial), and changing the definition for Changeable Copy Signs.

The Planning Commission continued their discussion of the proposed amendment, the option of asking Council for a moratorium to prevent the installation of any other electronic signs until after the Zoning Ordinance is rewritten and reviewed the additional language that was submitted by the sign companies. Tom Amor Jr. said that it was his understanding that a decision would be made this evening regarding the request.

MOTION by Ray Fortier, seconded by John Serocki to recommend that the request from Heller Signs to amend Section 1411.D of the Ordinance be denied.

Motion passed unanimously.

Top Notch Auto, LLC, 145 Harrison Street - Open Air Use

Top Notch Auto has been selling vehicles from the former Top Notch Marathon Station. This open air use was allowed on the parcel where the building was located as a nonconforming use. By expanding the use onto the two adjoining parcels the "open air use" in the C-1 Commercial District requires approval from the Planning Commission.

The Planning Commission postponed decision on this request until the July Meeting. A Worksession was held on June 26, 2003 and prior to this meeting on July 10, 2003. These worksessions allowed the Planning Commission members the opportunity to further review the request.

Members of the Planning Commission discussed the proposed open air use. Mr. Rose said it is the Planning Commissions responsibility to determine if the use is appropriate for that area. Top Notch Auto has to comply with the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance. Mr. Ennis has the option to apply for an appeal from the Zoning Board of Appeals in the event he wants to change any of the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance.

MOTION by John Serocki, seconded by David Kelley that the request from Top Notch Auto for an open air use be approved.

Motion passed unanimously.

OTHER COMMUNICATIONS:

None

WORK/STUDY SESSION:


A worksession will be held on July 24, 2003 at 5:30 p.m. The Planning Commission will be taking a dial-a-ride bus and tour the Manistee County Convention and Visitors Bureau on the corner of First and Cypress Streets and Green Acres on Twelfth Street.

ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION by Tony Slawinski, seconded by John Serocki that the meeting be adjourned. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

MANISTEE PLANNING COMMISSION



Denise J. Blakeslee, Recording Secretary

